

Oct. 5, 1889.

THE LATE ELIZA COOK.

TO OUR YOUNG READERS the name of Eliza Cook must sound like an utterance from a far-off time; it is only those whose age exceeds that of half a century that can fully realise the popular esteem in which the authorities of "The Old Arm Chair" and hundreds of other poems and ballads were held by the people at large, on account of the large-hearted and generous sympathy which she evinced, not only for the sick and suffering, but on behalf of every good cause, noble action, and all domestic virtues. Large numbers of her songs were set to music, and sang in innumerable households. Engravings of her features, with long hair, untrammeled by any twist or plait, and square massive jaw, romanesque in its contour, were in the window of every print shop. The very name of Eliza Cook was a household word, and to the popularity of her verses more than one journal owed the success of its publication.

The history of her career is soon told. Born on Christmas-eve, 1818, the youngest of eleven children of a Southwark tradesman, she lost her mother at an early age, and was thrown very much on her own resources for her education. As early as her fifteenth year

friends to prophecy that the author of such precocious talent must develop into an artist. But the child's father, the Rev. Edward Osborn, was one who, as regards his family, was blessed "with a quiver full of them," and with sons to be educated at college there was but little to spare for the artistic instruction of his daughter. And thus it came about that the child's first instructor was her mother, who taught her to copy heads in crayons, and subsequently sent her to Dickenson's in Maddox-street, where she was a student for a couple of months. Mr. T. Mogford being the master. This, with eight months' work in Mr. Leigh's school in Newman-street, was about all the regular teaching Miss Osborn obtained. But Mr. Leigh, who had an appreciative eye for a promising pupil, quickly saw in Miss Osborn one who was likely to do him credit, and kindly took upon himself the task of teaching her to paint in oils, in which she very rapidly progressed.

With instinctive love of art making her feel that painting and drawing were not labour but a delight, the young artist speedily developed her powers, and in 1855 exhibited two pictures at the Royal Academy in "Portraits of Mrs Sturgis and her Three Children" and "My Cottage Door," the latter being a small picture of a girl entering her cottage, with a basket of apples under her arm, which found a purchaser in Her Majesty the Queen. This first success was next year followed by one equally emphatic in the sale of her Academy picture, "Nameless and Friendless," a poor-looking young girl attempting unsuccessfully to sell her painting to a dealer, to Lady Chetwynd for the sum of £250. "The Governess: Sorrow and Silence are Strong, and Patient Endurance is Godlike," again attracted the attention of Her Majesty, and was purchased by her. In 1858 Miss Osborn secured a clever model from the Society for the Encouragement of Art for her picture called "Tough and Tender," an old sailor holding a shell to the ear of a child sitting upon his knee. The artist, indeed, secured her fair share of honorary awards, for whilst she obtained silver medals for both her paintings of Dr Johnson and his two young admirers, exhibited at the Royal Academy, and "For Ever," a young nun seated in her cell—she received the sixty-guinea prize from the Crystal Palace for her *gouache* subject, "Half the world knows not how the other half lives." This last-named picture was one of exceeding pathos and beauty, and showed us the interior of a miserable garret, where a shoemaker is engaged at his trade, whilst his wife sits at a white satin shoe. But they both pause, looking sorrowfully at the body of their dead child, laid out upon a box and covered with an old sheet. On the floor is seated another child playing unconcernedly with his toys. At the time Miss Osborn painted this picture there were no mortuaries, and she had it in her mind to suggest publicly such a provision for the dead. As a companion work, Miss Osborn painted what she called "For the Last Time," a similar melancholy occasion among rich people, with two young ladies entering a room carrying white flowers to place upon a coffin. Other pictures following in succeeding seasons were "The Escape of Lord Nithsdale from the Tower," exhibited at the Academy; "Twilight," with quotation from Shelley, "Our sweetest songs are those that sing of saddest thoughts"; two girls with a great hound lying at their feet, seated by the fireside listening to a companion singing in an adjoining room; "The Christmas Tree," a picture painted by the artist whilst in Germany, sold to the *Illustrated London News*, and reproduced in that journal; "God's Acre," two girls carrying a wreath of immortelle to a grave in a churchyard deeply covered with snow; "Going to the Fair—Belgium," a waggonload of peasants, a picture painted for Mr. Wallis, of the French gallery, and which was to have been engraved, but was burned in the fire at Graves'; and a "Portrait of Madame Bodichon," painted for Girton College and exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery. In 1886 Miss Osborn had at Goupil's Gallery sixty pictures and sketches in oils and pastels, entitled "Eleven Weeks in a Wherry on the Norfolk Broads"; in 1887, at the same gallery, "Beauties of the Bure" and landscapes painted in Norfolk; in 1888, at the New Gallery, a design called "Her Last Home," the old hull of a ship on Breydon Water, with stormy sky and grey, sympathetic scheme of colour; and in the present year, "El Bier—Algiers," and an oil painting of moonrise at sunset, Horsted, Norfolk.

In 1868 Miss Osborn lost her mother, and for two years seemed unable to rally herself to undertake any work of importance. She had travelled in Germany, Italy, Algeria, and during the great Franco-Prussian war devoted some months to nursing the sick and wounded.

As may have been gleaned from the vast majority of the pictures we have enumerated, a leading characteristic of Miss

she published verses, and soon after began to write in the *Weekly Dispatch*, which was the property of her patron, Alderman Harmer. One short poem appeared every week, and to the favour with which her verses were received no small share of the success of the paper was due.

In 1849 she started *Eliza Cook's Journal*, a weekly octavo sheet which appealed to the domestic and social feelings of the middle classes. It attained a large circulation, but was, owing to her failing health discontinued in 1854.

Her first collected volume, "Malaia and other Poems," appeared in 1840; and other volumes, including a collection of her poems, were published at intervals down to 1869. Since then she has printed little or nothing, and the very name of the woman whose writings did so much to promote the cause of truth, honesty, and social honesty amongst the people, has faded out, to be resuscitated for a time by her death.

The distribution of our literary pensions is not the subject of general approval; but no one can regard the modest allowance of £100 a year received by the deceased poetess as ill-beaten.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF MONTENEGRO AND THE GRAND DUKE AND DUCHESS OF LEUCHTTENBERG.

(See page 429.)

THE ALLIANCE of the Princess Milica of Montenegro with the Grand Duke Peter Nikolaievitch of Russia, whose portraits we published in *The Queen* on Aug. 31, has been quickly followed by the marriage of her sister, Princess Anastasia, to the Grand Duke George of Leuchtenberg. Among the rulers of the petty provinces of the Balkan peninsula, the princely family of Montenegro enjoys the favour of the Czar in a marked degree. This favour, which has been displayed upon more than one occasion, has been recently shown to the young bride by the conferment upon her of the title of "Imperial Highness." The wedding, which took place at Peterhof, the residence of the Russian Court, was attended by all the nearest relatives of the Grand Duke and Duchess.

The bride's father, Prince Nicholas I., was born at Njegos in 1841, and was proclaimed reigning Prince of Montenegro in 1860, as the successor to Danilo I. Shortly after his accession he married the Princess Milica, daughter of the Senator Peter Vaskotic, and known in her youth by the complimentary title of "Li Bellis Milica."

According to the custom of the country, the couple had been betrothed almost from their cradles, but the marriage has turned out none the less a very happy one. Their family consists of one son and three daughters, all of whom have been carefully educated, and are said to be possessed of many accomplishments. The Prince and Princess, who are represented in our portraits in Montenegrin dress, have taken a deep interest in the welfare of Montenegro during their reign of nearly thirty years. The Prince has specially devoted his attention to the army, which is now a highly trained force. He has, what is most valuable in a Border Prince, a great gift for the mastery of languages, and can speak French, Italian, German, Russian, and Slavonic with equal fluency. During the distressing famine which has recently occurred in Montenegro, the Prince has been indefatigable in his efforts, and, accompanied by his eldest son and by his Prime Minister, M. Petrovitch, has made a tour of inspection through the famine-stricken districts of his principality. Relief in money and kind was freely distributed.

Our portrait of Prince Nicholas is engraved from a photograph by Fritz Knauer, Baden, and that of the Princess is by Victor Angerer, Vienna.

MISS E. M. OSBORN.

THIS is a MOTHER in whom so strong was the instinctive love of art that she herself desired to be an artist. Miss Emily Mary Osborn found an appreciative admirer of a quaint little drawing she made when she was but a toddling child of four years. The subject of the sketch was an old woman and a donkey, but it was sufficiently good for both her mother and

handsome bracelet, a gratifying proof of the affectionate esteem in which she was held by the employes.

During this long and arduous career in the Telephone Office, Mrs Merlin's experiences in connection with the employment of women quite coincide with the views expressed by ladies working in similar directions; the applications for vacancies are dishearteningly numerous, although the salaries paid are small. Under the recent management London operators received while learning from 5s. to 7s. 6d., and when trained 11s. a week for work extending over eight hours daily, and on Saturdays from five to seven hours, the clerks taking alternate times. A separate staff receiving 18s. 6d. each, attended to the night work and Sunday duty, and Mrs Merlin arranged that these should be middle-aged women or widows. Clerks at the head of an exchange sometimes earn a guinea a week, and the two inspectresses engaged under Mrs Merlin's rule were paid from 27s. to 30s. a week. Their duties involved the inspection of the sixteen exchanges she controlled, and they had to ascertain if the subscribers received proper attention, and to report to headquarters any complaints which were made to them. Mrs Merlin had to see all the applicants and select the operators; she regards the work as peculiarly suited to women. A telephonist requires a quick ear and a good voice, and an



MRS BEAUFOY MERLIN.

unlimited amount of patience, for occasionally, when an inexperienced subscriber rings up and requires to "be put on a certain number," and there is a delay owing to the wires being occupied, some very severe language is conveyed under the shelter of the telephone, which would scarcely be uttered if the object of this unreasonable wrath stood face to face with the speaker. Many of the clerks in Mrs Merlin's charge were the daughters of clergymen and professional men, and it is much to be regretted, owing to the supply being far greater than the demand, that the average salary is insufficient to maintain those who are without homes to fall back upon. As the chances of getting beyond the pittance of 11s. a week are small, a girl who is not governed by the highest principle too often grows careless and indifferent, and, feeling that there is no advancement to be hoped for, accepts the first offer of a better post without any consideration for the company's requirements.

Sometimes people speak with much severity of "the inattention and stupidity of the clerks." As long as it is considered good policy to employ novices, there will, doubtless, be considerable difficulty attached to the manipulation of telephones. The public would certainly be far better served, and probably the directors would find it to their advantage to encourage old employés to remain and to secure their interest in the system itself by a small annual increase of salaries. Anyhow, the new directorate has its task cut out for it. Fortunately for the shareholders and the public, Col. Jackson, who is now the great power in Oxford-court, is fully alive to the practices which have hitherto hindered the development of telephonic enterprise in London, leaving the metropolis not only far behind America, but English and Scotch centres as well. In conjunction with the new board of directors, he will doubtless succeed in placing this great invention of the nineteenth century on a thoroughly satisfactory footing, without overlooking the interest of women workers. But a more conscientious, hard-working lady superintendent than Mrs Merlin proved herself can rarely be found, and she carries with her to her new sphere of usefulness the cordial good wishes of all with whom she was connected in the Telephone Company.

The portrait of Mrs Merlin which accompanies this sketch is taken from a photograph by Mr. Fries-Greene, of 20, Brock-street. She was born at Southampton, and her father, the late Capt. H. Foster, who was a commander in the P. and O. Company's service, was generally in the navy. She married a well-known Australian gentleman, who died in Sydney in 1873, leaving her with four young children, three of whom are still living. Her youngest boy was the victim of scarlet fever; the infection was conveyed in a letter received from a telephone operator, absent on consequence of an outbreak of fever in her family, which Mrs Merlin unhappily took home to answer, thus bringing about the end and event which she regards as "the greatest sorrow of her life."



MISS E. M. OSBORN.

Osborn's art work is a poetical statement often associated with the more highly sensitive artistic organization. It should be a pleasure to her friends to feel that she has amply fulfilled the promising talents of her early days.

Our portrait is from a photograph by Fraile and Young, of 246, Regent-street.

MRS BEAUFOY MERLIN.

THIS LADY, who has accepted the matronship of the college at Folkestone just opened by Sir Edward and Lady Currie, organised nine years ago the first London staff of female telephone clerks, and held the responsible appointment of Lady Superintendent of the United Telephone Company until its amalgamation with the National Company was accomplished a few weeks since. She had the charge of 290 telephone operators, the largest number of women clerks in London with the exception of the Telegraph and Post Office, and has received on her retirement, by the presentation of an address, accompanied by the gift of a

WEDDING PARASOL.—Real Brussels, Irish, and Old Point Lace, Fans, and Handkerchiefs. Maywatt's, 168, Oxford-street, W.—[A.D.V.]
WATERPROOF RUG LINER.—J. C. Cording and Co., Waterproofs, covered with Air-strect, Piccadilly. Have no other address, nor are they connected with any other house.—[A.D.V.]

TO BRIDES.—Lady G. and friends for years have sent the full value in clothes, jewellery, &c., to be used in their honeymoon, and have always received the full appointments, and have money on ready to buy out of necessities; they keep appointments, and have dear family with you. Their only address, Mr. and Mrs. L. Phillips' Old Curzon-street, Mayfair, W. They are privately placed to address. Note blotted 70 years. In private.—[A.D.V.]

BURNT.—"Gone and Burnt Paraffin" is the best remedy yet discovered for the removal of the worst corns and bunions. It is especially useful for reducing enlarged toes. Thousands have been cured of whom have suffered for 20 years without being able to get relief from any other remedy. A trial of a box is earnestly solicited, as great toe joints, which so much hamper a person, are easily relieved. Price 1s. Boxed in 1d. of all chemists, free for 14 stamps. M. Beetham and Son, Chemists, Chelsea.—[A.D.V.]

LORD BYRON ON NATURE AND ART.—We have not penned the lines "Don Juan," in which he certainly could surpass her, have thine innocence till then, and, when thou art a philosopher, no less than as a poet, and showed an appreciation of the arts by which even loves are made more lovely. Thousands of Englishwomen have over the last ten years been appreciating Bowland's Millions of Oil, which for nearly 100 years has been appreciated by sportsmen and beauties of the world. It prevents the hair falling off, strengthens the hair, and strengthens weak hair, is especially recommended for children's hair, and is also sold in a golden colour for powdered ladies and children. Sold everywhere in 3s. 6d., 7s., and 10s. 6d. bottins.—[A.D.V.]